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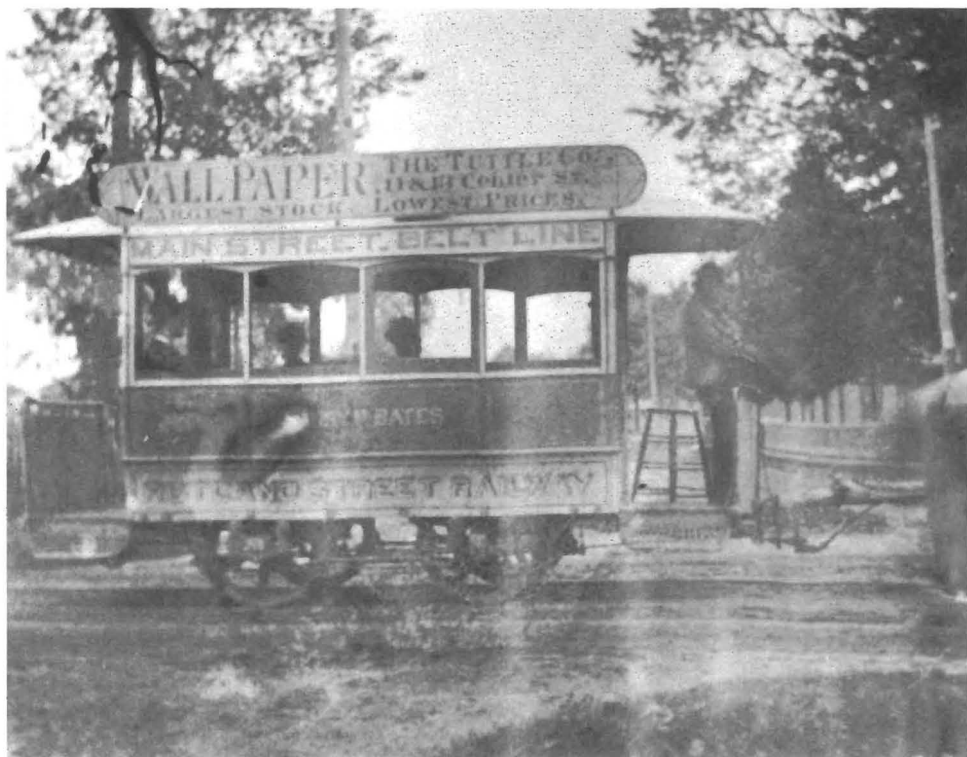
The Construction of the Rutland Street Railway in 1885



The John W. Cramton was a main line car of the Rutland Street Railway. It ran from Rutland to West Rutland and back. Here it pauses at the Chaffee Crossing in Rutland [Now the intersection of West Street and Columbian Avenue]. Main line cars were pulled by a span of horses.

The Author and Others

The topic of this Quarterly was not the topic originally planned. There was a delay in compiling the materials originally planned for this issue. Suddenly there was a need for a quick change of topic. Morris Tucker, who has developed a pastime of reading old *Rutland Herald*s, identified a wonderful series of articles and news reports about the construction of the Rutland Street Railway. Without his careful research this story would not have happened. Co-editor Jim Davidson grabbed his pencil and began a race to put the pieces together into a coherent story. Helen Davidson, publication committee member, jumped to the keyboard to enter the story literally as it came from husband Jim's pencil. Jake Sherman, co-editor, and Elaine Purdy, another committee member, stood at the ready to proofread and make constructive comments on the whole. Meanwhile Co-editor Jim Davidson selected pictorial material from the strong collection of material at the Society and completed the layout. Thus this *Quarterly* was most truly a cooperative effort.



RUTLAND IN RETROSPECT

The Harry M. Bates was a belt line car of the Rutland Street Railway. These cars were slightly shorter than the main line cars and were called "bottail" cars. They operated with a single horse except on severe grades.

The Construction of the Rutland Street Railway in 1885

By Jim Davidson

Horse-drawn railway cars began to be commonplace in American cities after the Civil War. On 13 November 1882, Martin G. Everts, John A. Sheldon, Evelyn E. Pierpoint, Redfield Proctor, J.B. Hollister, Walter C. Dunton, Cornelius C. Pierce, George H. Cheney, Rockwood Barrett, George A. Merrill, John N. Woodfin, James C. Dunn and Albert H. Tuttle incorporated a street railway company in Rutland. Everts was a lawyer and judge of the Rutland Municipal Court. Sheldon was an owner of Sheldons & Slason Marble Company in West Rutland. Pierpoint was a grocer and real estate dealer. Proctor was president of the Vermont Marble Company and an ex-governor of Vermont. Hollister was treasurer of the Dorset Marble Company of West Rutland. Dunton was an attorney. Pierce was secretary of the Rutland County Agricultural Society. Cheney was a general store merchant. Barrett was treasurer of the Columbian Marble Company and village auditor. Merrill was president of the Howe Scale Company. Dunn was a partner in Dunn and Cramton Hardware Company and a Rutland selectman. Tuttle was the Rutland postmaster and editor-in-chief and business manager of the *Rutland Herald & Globe*. With the exception of Proctor who lived in Proctor and Pierce who lived in East Clarendon, the incorporators all lived in the village of Rutland. The capital stock authorized was \$25,000.

In the summer of 1885, a board of directors was formed with Evelyn Pierpoint as president-treasurer and John Woodfin as secretary. Other board members were: Redfield Proctor, James C. Dunn, Rockwood Barrett, John A. Sheldon and George H. Cheney. On Friday 14 August the board of directors and a majority of the stockholders of the Rutland Street Railway Company met to hear proposals from a group of New York men, led by the three Haines brothers, who were developers and constructors of horse railroads in many other places. At this time, the Haines concern was completing a horse railway connecting Fort Edward to Glens Falls and Sandy Hill, NY.

Charles D. Haines of Brooklyn proposed that his concern would take a majority of the stock of the company and build the road. After some discussion, the offer was accepted in substance and the necessary steps were taken to pass ownership of the Rutland Street Railway Company over to the Haines concern. To give the Haines party control of the company it was voted to increase the board of directors from seven to fif-

teen. Charles D. Haines, John D. Haines of Sandy Hill, NY, T.E. Haines of Schenevus, NY, Fred A. Field, assistant postmaster of Rutland, John W. Cramton, president of the Steam Stone Cutter Company and proprietor of the Bardwell House in Rutland, Albert H. Tuttle of Rutland and S.D. Kendrick of Glens Falls were added to the old board of directors. The stockholders meeting adjourned and at the following board of directors meeting, Charles D. Haines was elected president. Evelyn Pierpoint remained as treasurer and John N. Woodfin as secretary. A committee consisting of Evelyn Pierpoint and Judge Walter Dunton was appointed to arrange for the transfer of the stock to Mr. Haines and his associates. The stockholders meeting was then called to order again and it was voted to increase the stock from \$15,000 to \$25,000. The stock would be issued as money was needed and a vote was taken at this time so that some of the newly elected directors, who were not already stockholders, could subscribe for one share each and thus become eligible stockholders.

The directors of the Rutland Street Railway Company met on 25 August, with Charles D. Haines, the new president. As soon as Evelyn Pierpoint and Judge Walter Dunton could arrange for the transfer of the stock to Charles D. Haines and the other directors another meeting would be held to make arrangements for letting the contracts to build the road. On Saturday 29 August, the *Rutland Herald & Globe* reported that Charles D. Haines had told the Burlington folks that as soon as the line at Glens Falls was done, his concern would begin work in Rutland. The date would probably be about 15 September. The Burlington folks were quite chagrined that little Rutland, which was not yet a city, might have a horse railroad before Burlington. By the following week the date for starting the Rutland work had been moved to about 25 September.

On Tuesday 8 September, the directors of the horse railway company met at the Bates House. Nine of the 15 directors were present, including seven from the village. Transfer of the stock of the Rutland Street Railway Company to the American Railway Construction Company was approved. Evelyn Pierpoint was chosen trustee to hold the stock until the contract to build the road was carried out. Charles D. McGonegal was elected director in place of President Charles D. Haines who resigned. John D. Haines was elected president of the corporation. It was voted to reduce the number of directors from fifteen to seven and to raise the capital stock to \$30,000. The construction company took 113 more shares, making the total amount of paid up capital \$28,000.

The construction company, with headquarters in New York City, was composed of J.D. and D.S. Haines of Sandy Hill, A. McGonegal of

Syracuse and S.D. Lake of Rochester. It was proposed to begin work on the Rutland Street Railway on 15 October. Agents were to be in Rutland the following week to make the necessary arrangements. It was expected that the road would be done and running about the middle of November. A building to house 10 cars with stables for 30 horses was planned.

The West Rutland line would start at the Bardwell House and pass through Merchants Row, Grove and State Streets, by the House of Correction to the West Rutland depot. The fare to West Rutland would probably be eight cents and five cents to Center Rutland. This line was to be built first.

A belt or village line was proposed to run from the Bardwell House through Strongs Avenue, Madison, Prospect, Washington, Court, West and Main Streets through Perkins Avenue [now Crescent Street] and Grove Street to Merchants Row. Work on the village or belt line would not begin until spring.

On Friday, 9 October, John D. Haines of the American Railway Construction Company was in Rutland to try to stir up public interest in purchasing the stock and bonds necessary to complete the financing for the Rutland Street Railway. When asked about the reason for the delay in starting the construction, Mr. Haines replied that, "It is only due to the lack of interest on the part of Rutland's businessmen, and their failure to invest in it." Meanwhile the Burlington horse railway was making progress while the Rutland project stood still waiting for the completion of financing.

"Burlington business men bought \$22,000 in bonds right away and the rolling stock of the road has already been ordered. Our company made almost the same proposition to them that is now given to the Rutland people and they were quick to take advantage of it. The last road we built was finished from Glens Falls to Fort Edward last month and opened October 1. The first week's earnings show an income of about \$69 dollars per day, while it costs less than \$25 to run it, so that it promises to pay 16 per cent interest on its capital stock of \$70,000. The road is narrow gauged and runs six and a half miles. Twelve cents is the fare charged for the entire distance, and 16 trips are now made daily and will be increased to 26 trips soon. One horse draws the cars, excepting up grades, where a span is used to help them. There are no conductors employed, but the fare box system is successfully used and the management of the road is in every way economical and systematic. We want to build a broad gauge road in Rutland, however, and think that there is a greater demand for a horse railroad here than at Glens Falls or Burlington either. There would be less competition to West Rutland than on the Glens Falls road to Fort Edward. The

distance is less and there would be more dependence on it. The charter of the Rutland Company allows for \$40,000 in stock. The proposition the American Railroad Construction Company makes is to have a bonded debt of \$28,000, the cost of the construction of a road to West Rutland. Of this, the construction company agrees to take \$10,000 worth of bonds, and the remaining \$18,000 must be taken by business men in Rutland. The bonds are to be gold five-twenties, bearing six per cent interest. Each person taking \$100 in bonds will be given \$100 in stock, but the construction company asks for \$15,000 in stock for the \$10,000 in bonds, which they purchase, the \$5,000 bonus being a fair compensation for their work. By this arrangement there would be \$18,000 of the stock held here, and \$15,000 by the construction company, and a balance of \$7,000 in stock would be reserved for the building of a road in the Center[Center Rutland] next spring, as the charter allows \$40,000 capital stock. This latter road is estimated to cost \$15,000, so that \$8,000 more would have to be then raised for that purpose. As soon as the people of Rutland buy \$18,000 worth of bonds, work on the railroad will begin, but thus far only \$2,000 of this amount has been taken and the success of the road depends on the purchase of the \$16,000 worth of bonds remaining. The proposition made here is a better one than that offered to the Glens Falls or Burlington people, and yet there seems to be considerable difficulty in inducing the business men to wake up to the fact that the investment is a good one and the best means of building the road, which they cannot but admit will add much to the enterprise and growth of the village. Glens Falls has 10,000 people and Rutland about 17,000 and it is a wonder that people here did not build a street railroad years ago. I will be in town Saturday working to induce people to take hold of the matter, and wish it understood that a person can purchase \$100 in bonds just as well as a larger amount. It is surprising to me that there should be so much hesitation about it. The record of the construction company will bear the closest investigation, and I am ready to furnish facts and figures about the many roads it has built, every one of which has been successfully and economically managed and is paying well. A street railroad has got to come here soon and from its long and successful experience the construction company is fitted to build and manage such a road successfully. The Burlington road will be started this fall, and just as soon as Rutland people will agree to take the \$16,000 in bonds, the material and rolling stock will be ordered for this place and work commenced at once. It is Rutland's own fault that Burlington was allowed to take the lead in this matter and have the first railroad, but I hope the business men will take hold of it and see that they are not too far behind the times here."

John D. Haines' visit to Rutland, his presentation on the attractive features of investing in the Rutland Street Railway, and his unfavorable comparison with the businessmen of Burlington apparently bore fruit. The *Rutland Herald & Globe* on Tuesday 20 October reported that the Rutland Horse Railway was now an assured fact. All but \$1,200 of the \$28,000 in bonds had been disposed of. President John D. Haines had left on Monday 19 October for Philadelphia where he planned to purchase four cars of the most modern patterns with double platforms, capable of taking 25 to 30 passengers each. These cars would be built by J.G. Brill and Co. of Philadelphia. Mr. Haines had been so successful in completing arrangements for the road to West Rutland that he was confident that the belt road in the village could also be completed by fall. As this portion of the railway would be most valuable to those living in the village, Haines' efforts to raise the necessary funds for it among businessmen was most apt to meet with a ready response.

The horse railway prospect in Rutland that looked so glum 10 days earlier now appeared assured. Within a few days bonds purchased in Rutland raised \$13,400.

The West Rutland line had been financed and now a line in the village through the principal streets and to the fairgrounds also appeared to be assured. The *Rutland Herald & Globe* reported that "merchants are beginning to realize that the enterprise [the street railway] will bring them trade as well as benefit real estate owners along the routes. There is no difficulty now in disposing of the stock for the proposed belt line road.... The *Glens Falls Times* said the road in that place had perceptibly increased the business of the merchants and a list of those who acknowledged the fact was published. It also stated that although the number of trips had been increased, the cars were as crowded as at first.

In spite of a storm on Wednesday 21 October, Charles D. Haines was busy about the village in search of stock with which to build the belt line road in the village. He secured \$7,000 of the \$10,000 needed. S. D. Lake, superintendent of the American Railway Construction Company arrived in Rutland on Thursday 22 October to lay out the work. He planned to select a site for a depot and grade locations for turnouts. The Cambria Steel Company of Philadelphia promised to ship the rails at once and 12,000 ties were ordered from Fort Ann, NY. The superintendent of construction remained in Rutland to push the work so that it might be completed before cold weather would set in. Although the street railway had met many delays, the momentum for a rapid construction push was present. Would the weather cooperate? Would the necessary materials arrive on time? Could the job be completed before the end of

the year? It was now a race for time.

By Monday 26 October, the *Rutland Herald & Globe* reported that "there is now talk of building a branch line of the horse railroad through 'Nebraska', which if done would be a great convenience to the people living in that part of the town. Rev. Chas. Boylan has taken an active interest in the matter and promises to contribute liberally to the construction of it if it is considered practical." The momentum was now spawning dreams.

On Friday 30 October, the directors of the Rutland Street Railway Company held a meeting at which technical details were discussed. The contract with the construction company was to be drawn up immediately. A part of the rails for the road had already been shipped and were expected to arrive the next week. The ties had been ordered and would arrive about the time the rails arrived. It was proposed that a large gang of Italians would be brought here from New York to do the work on the road. The managers claimed that the Italians could be hired for lower wages and would do more satisfactory work than American laborers. This plan to import Italians to work on the horse railway aroused considerable opposition among stockholders and citizens generally. By Monday 2 November, the Haines brothers had concluded that the best policy would be to employ local laborers, if enough could be found to do the work. But as the construction season was so far advanced, a large number would be needed to put the road through before winter. Thus some laborers from out of town might be needed.

On Wednesday 4 November, the horse railway company confirmed that it would build the depot on the north side of State Street, as at first proposed, and would also use a stable in the Caden Block on West Street for extra horses. Plans for construction of the track were changed. Now the belt line would be laid first as it could be laid at a rate of a third or a half mile a day if enough men could be hired to do the work. Mr. Haines had a list of 200 workmen who at first were to be divided into gangs of about 20 each. These were to be enlarged as the men became accustomed to the work. The managers expected to finish the belt line in ten days after beginning construction. The horse railway company advertised for 150 men to work in laying track. Although the ties and rails were expected to arrive by Saturday 7 November, only 800 of the 12,000 ties needed arrived then. About 50 tons of rails and several carloads of ties arrived on the following Tuesday morning. On Tuesday afternoon 10 November, S. D. Lake, contractor for the horse railway and one of the directors of the company, drove the first spike in the construction of the road at 12:50 pm on Main Street at the head of Center Street. Construction, which

would move counterclockwise around the belt line, was now underway.

The horse railway company made an important change in the route of the belt line, which would now go by the post office. The final arrangement would start the track at Merchants Row on Center Street, go up Center Street to Wales Street, go south on Wales Street to Washington Street, go up Washington Street to Court Street thence to Center Street and continue up Center Street to Main Street. On Main Street the line would go to North Street, down Perkins Avenue to Crescent Street, down Crescent Street to Grove Street and down Grove Street to Merchants Row and Center Street. As the charter for the belt line did not give permission to lay tracks on Wales Street, Merchants Row and Court Street, a formal license had to be obtained from the village trustees. This request was readily granted. There was still hope that the belt line in "Nebraska" might also be built by fall as \$1,000 of the \$10,000 stock necessary had already been acquired.

On Friday 6 November, the Rutland Street Railway Company closed the contract with the American Railroad Construction Company. The West Rutland and the belt line were to be completed before May of 1886. Judge Dunton appeared as counsel for the directors and specifications previously published were formally approved. The directors also voted to increase the stock to \$50,000, and to make \$10,000 of this a guaranteed 6% investment, taking precedence over the regular stock.

Two horses were purchased for building the road, while 16 others were sent from Rutland for the Burlington Horse Street Railway. The cars on the West Rutland route were to be drawn by two horses. The cars on the belt line in the village were to be drawn by one horse. There were no conductors. Rather the Slosson fare box was to be used by the drivers. These were all arranged at the forward end of the car, with an opening on the inside in which to put the fare or ticket. There was a glass slide on the outside, so that the driver could see what each passenger put in, as it fell on a glass plate. A lever dropped the fare or ticket into a box below after the driver saw that the fare was correct. At night a receiver opened the boxes and the driver had nothing to do with handling funds, except to see that everyone paid. The company sold 12 tickets to West Rutland and 22 tickets to Center Rutland for \$1.00. Thirty special tickets for school children on the belt line were also \$1.00. Two open cars would be considered for the West Rutland line for the summer, if the road was as successful as it was expected to be. Only one turnout or switch on the belt line was planned to be located at the corner of Main and High Streets. Cars were scheduled to run the complete village loop in about 22 minutes. If the weather held good and nothing interfered with the work, rails could be laid on

Merchants Row by Wednesday 18 November.

On Wednesday 11 November, there were 65 men putting down track on Main Street and 25 more began on Crescent Street in the afternoon to work toward Merchants Row. Iron rail was laid down on Main Street from Center Street north to Kendall Avenue. The process of laying track was like that for a steam railroad except that there was no grading and there were practically no instruments, such as levels and transits, used to adjust it. The rails were like those on a steam railroad except lighter. They weighed 25 pounds to a yard. The ties were chestnut and oak measuring about four by six inches. The gauge of the horse railway was the same as the steam railroad standard which was four feet, eight and one-half inches. The ties were placed about five feet apart.

Several gangs of men worked laying the tracks, each perfecting a special part. The rails and ties were first distributed with the rails on either side of the track and the ties in position. A gang of men with picks and shovels dug trenches for the ties, another gang followed digging down where the rails were to go, another laid the rails on the ties and fastened them together at the ends and then the iron was spiked down. The ties were adjusted to the proper level and earth and gravel were filled in to make the surface smooth. Lastly, stones were picked out from between the rails. The iron rail was allowed to stand about two inches above the surface of the street. The grade followed the grade of the street. From Center Street north to Colonel Merrill's house the track was in the middle of the road. From there it took the west side to North Street where it turned.

On Friday 13 November, progress in laying track was slowed by the need to install three turns: one at the corner of Main and Center Streets, another on Crescent Street at the head of Church Street and a third at the corner of North Street and Crescent Street. The switch, which was to be put on Main at High Street, had not yet arrived. One gang of men worked down from Main to Court Street and another up Crescent and North Streets nearly to Main. The expectation was that the West Rutland line would be built much faster as there were no turns of any consequence while on the belt line there were eight.

Work, which was started on the foundation of the car barn on State Street on Wednesday 11 November, was being pushed although the cars were not expected until 5 December. Work progressed well on the car barn and on Saturday 28 November, the men began slating the roof. The building was a very substantial structure, which measured 85 by 60 feet. Cars would be kept in the "Ls" on each side of the center. There was accommodation for 32 horses. In the front of the building there was a receiver's and a bookkeeper's office as well as a waiting



The car barn and stable of the Rutland Street Railway was located on the north side of State Street just east of the East Creek.

room. In the rear there was space for a blacksmith as the company did its own shoeing. There was also a repair shop. Mr. Haines said that the ground and building cost about \$3,600.

During the latter half of November the horse railroad project ran into a series of difficulties. On the 16th of November the 17-year-old son of E.C. Scoville was badly hurt while working on the street railway. A fellow workman swung his pick over his shoulder just as Scoville backed up behind him. Scoville received a bad cut in the small of the back, grazing the bones of the spinal column. He was attended by Dr. Gale who considered the wound serious though probably not life threatening.

On the same date a reporter from the *Rutland Herald & Globe* interviewed Mr. Haines, the president of the street railway, about the "T" rails, which were being laid on the street railway. When asked if these rails would prove satisfactory to the public, he responded that it made no difference with the company how much fault finding there

was on the part of the public. The American Railroad Construction Company lays "T" rails; it has the power of the charter to lay a railroad in Rutland and a contract with the Rutland Street Railway Company to do the work. It will do no good to agitate the subject or find fault, for the company will lay only "T" rails in spite of any opposition or protest.

Mr. Haines went on to explain how the flat rails were more expensive and wore out much faster as wagons and all sorts of vehicles would use them. They are laid on stringers running lengthwise and the ends of the rails are worn off very fast by the car wheels as there is liable to be a little play at each end where the rails meet. Mr. Haines felt that when the road was finished the public would not have much occasion to find fault. Those who want the flat rails are looking for the horse railway company to build a track for their use. This additional traffic would wear them out faster than the car wheels would.

When asked by the reporter if he didn't think that the rights of the public to a good highway ought to be respected by the railway company, Mr. Haines replied, "We are not building the railroad in the interest of teamsters and drivers of other vehicles.... We are building it in the interest of the stockholders." When asked if the interest of the village in its streets should be sacrificed to the railroad, Haines responded that the patrons of the street railway are a majority. The reporter then suggested that Mr. Haines and the company could be accused of an attitude like Mr. Vanderbilt when he said, "the public be damned."

Mr. Haines then directed the reporter to a Mr. McGonegal as Haines had to start for Burlington to join in the celebration of the opening of the street railway there.

Mr. McGonegal said that among horse railway construction people there was a common agreement that "T" rails were preferable to the flat or "L" rail. Companies only laid flat rails where city or town authorities required it. McGonegal said, "we shall pay no attention to complaints but go right on with the work; and when it is finished it will bear criticism." McGonegal went on to say that the company will fill in dirt on the outside of the track even with the top of the rails and tamp the dirt in on top of the ties, so that there will be less than two inches of rail protruding on the inside. The track can be crossed easily enough, but teams will find it unsafe to trot along the track lengthwise as the wheels will likely get caught under the flange of the rails. The company will leave enough room for teams to go without driving much on the track. Plank crossings will be built at the intersection of streets where teams will be forced to drive across the rails. "There are those who may be called chronic fault-finders, and they look to our incomplete track and pronounce it a sham. The route of the road will look very different after the ties are covered and the cars running."

At the trustees meeting that evening, Dr. Gale appeared before the board to ask if instead of coming from Washington Street down Wales and Center to Merchants Row, that the company go down Washington Street directly to the Bardwell House and down Merchants Row to Evelyn Street. This would leave Center Street and the north end of Merchants Row free of tracks. He thought that the road would make trouble on Center Street in the winter on account of the snow, which would pile up and have to be carted off. The board had some plain talk about the horse railroad track and the trouble it was likely to make in the streets. However, the general opinion was that the charter gave the company a practical monopoly to do as it pleased, regardless of the interests of the village.

In spite of criticism and complaint, construction on the street railway moved forward. One gang of workmen worked down Washington Street through Wales and onto Center Street. Another gang working down Grove Street had nearly reached the Baxter Hose Company's house. A few hours work remained on North Main Street where one of the frogs for the switch was wrong and would have to be fixed. On the West Rutland line the contractor expected to lay four miles of track in a week. At street crossings the marble slabs were taken up and they would be cut and put back while at the corners and other places where teams were obliged to cross the track, planks were put down both inside and out.

The first victim of the horse railroad lost a wheel on Washington Street on the 19th of November. Meanwhile there was complaint that some residents of Main Street had enclosed plots of ground in front of their houses. As it was, only a very narrow strip of road was left between the street railroad and the fences.

On that afternoon at a special meeting of the village trustees, some complaints about the manner in which the construction company was laying the street railway track surfaced. The trustees talked the issue over and decided to go over the route at once. A team was sent for and the trustees, with Mr. Haines and Mr. McGonegal of the construction company, went over the route. At the corner of Washington and Court Streets the first stop was made and it was found that the crosswalk should be lowered from 12 to 16 inches. On Center Street, from Court to Main Streets, some objection was made to the route of the track, which ran along the south side of the highway. It was thought that it ought to run in the center of the street. At High Street, where a switch was to be placed, the trustees thought that the ditch on the west side of the road could be filled in and the switch placed there. This would free up highway space. Coming down North Street from Main, the highway was very narrow and it would be necessary to widen the road several

feet. As this was located outside the village corporation limits, it was under the control of the town selectmen. The selectmen said that the street railway company should widen the road while the company said it would not. On Crescent Street, at the head of Church Street, the track crossed the highway to the south side and continued there to Grove Street. Selectman Landon said "It was the understanding with them [the railway company] before the road was built that it should run on the north side of Crescent Street all the way and the selectmen will probably order them to change it." The trustees greatly objected to the line of track at the upper end of Grove Street. In front of lawyer Harmon's house the track ran very near to the hitching posts. At the corner of Park Avenue it took the east side of the road and continued so to the Baxter Hose Company's house. There it took the center of the road. The trustees voted after their tour that the track on Grove Street be moved to the center of the highway from the village line south to Garden Street. They also ordered that the track on Center Street between Court and Main Streets should be fixed either by placing the track in the center of the highway or by widening the street. They also ordered that the track at the corner of Washington and Wales Streets be laid so that teams could pass on each side of the track.

Workmen on the horse railway laid a sidetrack through Merchants Row from B.F. Pollard's store to Fisher's Drug Store. This would be a meeting point for the cars of the main line and the belt line. This would have been located in front of the Bates House had it not been for the curve in the track in that location. Mr. Haines said that the company



The building of the horse street railway in such a short period of time took a large number of men. This group was photographed as they worked on the Merchants Row section of the railway.

would change the track on the upper end of Grove Street to the center of the highway as the village trustees had ordered. The company would also make changes at other places as was desired. "We [the horse railway company] are willing to change the track where it will be for the convenience of the public." On the West Rutland highway the selectmen discovered that at Center Rutland the road had been gradually working away from its original line and was now partly on railroad land. Earth removed from the two hills being cut down was used to widen the road and thus give room for the horse railway track. The construction company agreed to wait for the grading to be finished by the town on the two hills just this side of Center Rutland. Meanwhile they would begin laying track between Center and West Rutland the next morning. Track had already been laid to the first hill beyond the Chaffee Crossing. The selectmen planned to watch every foot of track laid from the village limits to West Rutland. The selectmen insisted that the company build the track on the south side of the road. They had decided not to allow the track to cross the road at all. A member of the board of selectmen was on site every day to see that the town's instructions were met.

The workmen made good progress on Monday 23 November in laying the track for the street railway toward West Rutland. The track had been laid on State Street a little way beyond the House of Correction. From there they skipped over to a point nearly opposite the Ripley Mills and they laid track through the covered bridge at the Center. The work of lowering the hill at the Chaffee Crossing was well along. There would be only two turnouts on the West Rutland line: one in front of the gristmill at the Center and the other just east of the railroad track at West Rutland. The work of connecting the belt line with the main line at State and Grove Streets was to be finished on the 24th of November. A gang of men began work on Monday the 23rd of November to change the track on upper Grove Street to the center of the highway. At the corner of Court and Washington Streets the highway and crosswalk were lowered about 12 to 14 inches to correspond with the grade of the street railway track.

Thursday, the 26th of November, was Thanksgiving Day and Mr. Haines of the railway construction company had reason to rejoice. In spite of numerous delays and last minute problems, the railway was nearing completion. He was confident that the horse railroad would be finished in the next 10 days. Nearly four miles of road was done and about three miles underway. By Thanksgiving evening the men would have laid the track over the first hill that had been cut down near Center Rutland. The men were at work cutting down the second hill a little east of Ripley's Mills. They expected to finish this in about a day

or two. A gang of about 30 men finished re-laying the track on Grove Street on Wednesday evening. Mr. Haines was quite upbeat. "We shall have a grand celebration here at the opening of the road, and we shall not put a car on the road until we know that everything is all right."

On Monday 30 November the *Rutland Herald & Globe* was able to report that the horse railroad was completed to the covered bridge at Center Rutland except where work cutting down the second hill was still in progress. The men put a switch in front of the Center Rutland House on Saturday instead of in front of the gristmill as was at first planned. So far track had been laid on the extreme southern edge of the road on this route. In downtown Rutland the track through Merchants Row from the Bates House to the fairgrounds would be laid on the western side of the road. The horse railway cars were to be shipped from Philadelphia on the next day. The one negative was the observation that no more work would be done on the road to West Rutland until next spring unless there should be some warm weather.

On Saturday 5 December Mr. Haines reported that the statement of earnings and expenses of the Glens Falls, Sandy Hill and Fort Edward horse railroad should encourage folks in Rutland. That horse railroad showed average earnings of \$51.03 a day during the month of November. This did not include income from advertising on the cars. The expense of running the cars averaged \$24.75 per day. This left a daily profit of \$26.28 to pay the interest on the investment and for system repairs. The people there seemed entirely satisfied with the line and patronized it liberally.

Since the ground had frozen, the picks used by the workmen on the street railway had to be sharpened often. For over two weeks a man at Mansfield & Stimson's Machine Shop was kept busy sharpening them.

On 5 December optimism was heard from the construction managers that the horse railroad toward West Rutland might still be finished this season. Only about a mile and a half of track remained to be laid except for short distances at the gravel hill and Wells Hill. The tie holes had been dug and rails laid a half-mile of that distance. With a few days of good weather the road could be finished. The selectmen had greatly delayed the work of laying the track, as they did not cut down the hills on the road to West Rutland in a timely fashion. It was expected that work on the gravel hill would be completed momentarily. But the work at the Wells Hill would take several days as a ledge 10 or 12 feet wide in the center would have to be blasted out. In some places the road had been widened from five to ten feet.

On Saturday 5 December there was no work done in cutting down the hills at Center Rutland or at West Rutland or in laying track because of rain. Sheldon Hill had been cut down at the highest point

about two feet and the road widened 10 feet. The selectmen had hoped to finish the work on the Wells Hill in the next five days. But now the ground was so frozen that no more work could be done. Things would be fixed up as well as possible until next spring. At the gravel hill it was found that a house and shed owned by Ripley Sons stood partly in the highway. They were moved to the north about 25 feet. This made the road considerably wider at that point.

It appeared that the horse railway would not be finished in 1885, because of the weather. The rain had softened the ground considerably but the following freeze made it harder than ever. Laying a track was practically out of the question. The railroad people still held out hope that the weather might change and permit them to finish the work. In any case, the cars could run around the belt line and to Center Rutland. The West Rutland road with the unfinished grading and unfinished track was now in a horrible condition.

In spite of myriad problems and some uncooperative weather, the street railroad set Saturday evening 12 December as the date for the opening of the belt line. Three cars had been shipped on the previous Saturday and three more were shipped on the previous Tuesday from J.G. Brill and Company of Philadelphia. Two more cars were shipped from Stevenson and Company of New York on the previous Wednesday. However, by Friday no cars had arrived and their delay raised the specter of delaying the celebration on Saturday.

The cars were named for some of the men more prominently interested in the road. Their names were: "John N. Baxter", "John A. Sheldon", "John W. Cramton", "John N. Woodfin", "Harry M. Bates", "Cheney Brothers", "George R. Bottum", and "Albert H. Tuttle".

On Thursday and Friday the weather was cooperative and hopes were again raised that the railroad could be finished in 1885. The ground was thoroughly thawed out and 30 men were set at work on Merchants Row and a larger number on the West Rutland line. The road was laid to the Bardwell House on Merchants Row on Thursday and as far as Cheney Brothers store on Strongs Avenue on Friday. Painting the depot barn began on Thursday.

The horse cars arrived on Saturday 12 December, just in time to be prepared for the inaugural procession, which was planned for 7:00 p.m. in the evening.

The main line cars appeared in the freight yard on the 10 o'clock train. It took less than five minutes to gather a larger crowd of boys than could be got together by any event short of a circus. Boys of an older age found excuses to go over toward the depot as the process of unloading the cars from the freight train went on. Most Rutland people had seen similar conveyances and simply went out to see what "our

cars" looked like. But some had never seen a horse car before. As soon as the cars could be put together they were started around the track to "limber them up" and give the horses and drivers a little practice as well as to test the track. They were followed by shouting packs of boys who howled together when the wheels left the track, as they often did. Nevertheless the boys were ready to help lift the cars back in place with a "one-two-three" and an "all together".

The quality of the cars was a pleasant surprise to almost everyone. John Stevenson & Company of New York had made the belt line cars while those of the main line were from the works of Brill & Company of Philadelphia. Three of the main line cars, the "Cheney Brothers", the "John W. Cramton" and the "John A. Sheldon", came in the forenoon. The "John N. Woodfin" and the "A.H. Tuttle" came at 5:00 pm. The remaining cars, the "John N. Baxter", the "H.M. Bates" and the "George R. Bottum" would arrive on Tuesday 15 December.

The cars of the main line were 18 feet long, including the platforms, and seated 15 passengers comfortably. They used green lights at night. The belt line cars were 16 feet long, "overall", and carried red lamps.

As no conductors were to be hired, the Slosson drivers' fare boxes were used in all the cars. There was a box in each end of the short cars and one interchangeable box in the long cars. Where two boxes were used, an ingenious device closed the mouth at the top, thereby leaving the directions in sight, "Put fare in at the other end." When the box was open under the lid was the direction "Put fares in here." The ticket or fare had to be put in when the passenger first got on board or his attention was called to the box by a ring from the driver. By a single crank motion the driver could open or shut the rear door of the car while standing on the front platform.

An improvement on the usual bell signal was a double strap running along each side of the car within easy reach of those sitting down. Passengers pulled this strap for the driver to stop. Miniature coal stoves in the middle of one of the seats heated all the cars. In front of the platforms of the belt line cars were the words "City Line" with the number of the car. "Main Line" was painted on the platforms of the other cars. The cars were all prettily painted and well upholstered.

Invitations to the inaugural run of the street railway were confined to village officers and the stockholders of the road and their relations. The persons whose names the cars bore had nicely trimmed them. At 7:00 pm the five cars that had arrived were drawn up in line on Center Street. The night was pleasant and the party in good humor. In spite of the fact that the cars continually ran off the tracks, all seemed to have a good time. It is safe to say that 3,000 people gathered

in the vicinity of the corner of Merchants Row and Center Street to watch the start. A band in a wagon up ahead struck up a lively air promptly at 7:00 pm and an exciting scene followed.

The horses, unused to the cars, pranced and pulled in every direction. To change the order of the procession the cars were all switched down onto Merchants Row and nearly every car was shipwrecked on the corner and, in turn, it had to be lifted back onto the track, while the crowd jeered and shouted themselves hoarse. Policemen ran up and down the sides of the track. The Haines brothers were everywhere giving directions to green drivers and orders about getting the cars back on track again. It was nearly 8 o'clock when the line was fairly underway and colored lights began to burn along the route. The curve on the corner of Wales Street proved an obstruction, which derailed about every other car. However, after they reached Main Street, mishaps occurred less frequently and each car ran off on its own way.

The "J. W. Cramton" was ahead with Treasurer McGonegal driving. Next came the "John A. Sheldon," with J. D. Haines driving. Third came the "Cheney Bros.," with C. D. Haines driving. The fourth car was the "John N. Woodfin." D.S. Haines drove the rear car which was the "A. H. Tuttle." In the Cheney and Tuttle cars, passengers wore souvenir badges with the name of the car printed on them in gilt letters. Candy and light refreshments were passed around in several of the cars and occupants shouted and laughed with the freedom of a sleighing party. Red and green lights were continually burned and several buildings were illuminated.

It took less than an hour to make the circuit of the belt line and draw up in front of the Bates House. There the procession changed order and started for Center Rutland.

Snatches of conversations were interesting. One woman was telling a friend how Mrs. Jones had a nice pocket for horse car tickets worked into a new dress she had just made. The men spent their spare time in betting whether they would run off the track at the next curve or not. One driver claimed his car jumped the tracks but once. Others were derailed at least a dozen times. The cars got back to the Bates House where there were echoes of "three times three, for our car". The party broke up at 9:45 pm in front of the Bardwell House.

The horse cars ran nearly all day Sunday 13 December when about 1,000 fares were collected. Many rode from curiosity but had it not been for the bad weather there would have been twice as many passengers. Mr. Haines seemed perfectly satisfied with the first trial of the track. He indicated that the cars would not run off once they had gotten a little of the spring out of them and were worn so that they settled down and adapted themselves to the rails. Most of the mishaps

Saturday night were due to new horses and inexperienced drivers according to Haines. A driver had to get used to the track, no matter how well he could handle the reins, to be able to keep the cars on evenly.

Starting at 9 a.m. cars on the belt line ran every half hour each way from the corner of Center Street and every hour on the line to Center Rutland from Cheney's store. When the last three cars arrived on Tuesday, trips began at 6 a.m. and ran until 10 p.m. There were two horse cars running all day Monday. The cars were crowded from morning to night. The drivers had all they could do to manage their horses so conductors went along and would continue to do so until things settled down. The bobtail cars [belt line cars] were taken off the belt line at 4 p.m. and their places filled with the large cars to meet the rush of travel.

One horse hauled the short car on the belt line. A helping animal was stationed at the corner of Center and Wales Streets to help on the pull up the hill. The cars ran off the track times without number. When a derailment occurred the men in the car would exit to help lift the car on again. Young boys along the way would all give an exultant howl and rush to help lift the car. Meanwhile the women would all crowd to one end to make the task easier. Everyone seemed to take the derailments as a huge joke.

The worst curves were at the corners of Center and Wales Streets and Crescent and Grove Streets. These corners, as well as those at the head of Church Street and at the corner of Center and Merchants Row, were partly re-laid on Tuesday 15 December and the cars ran much better as a result.

The company now had 23 horses under the care of Frank Sanders at the barn on State Street where a telephone had been placed. A horse on the belt line was driven an hour and a half to two hours and then given a rest. A pair of horses went to Center Rutland twice between rests.

On Tuesday evening the horse railway offered a special service for the performance at the rink on Church Street. Passengers were to be dropped and picked up at the corner of Grove and Garden Streets.

An attempt on Monday to work on the horse railroad's main line toward West Rutland was given up because the ground was too frozen.

The horse cars were patronized more and more every day. Two cars, one on each line, carried nearly 800 people on Tuesday 15 December. Still more rode on Wednesday. An additional car was placed in service on the belt line on Thursday. It ran both ways every half hour. The belt line cars were crowded after 4 p.m. with women going home from shopping and businessmen going home to tea. The

cars on the main line made 16 round trips per day and more cars were added as the increase of patronage required. Cars were waiting at the Opera House after the close of the performance on Thursday. Mr. Haines said that they would complete the line to West Rutland as soon as the ground thawed in the spring. He was confident that at that time the "Nebraska" line would be built. Men had been tinkering with various parts of the track and the cars left the track less than at first.

Although the horse railway seemed to be settling in to a successful routine the *Herald & Globe* reporter found that critics could still be found. When one of the hackmen was asked if the horse cars would injure his business, the reply came, "Of course they will." The hackman went on to say, "I hope that those persons who have invested in the thing will get all the horse railroad they want." A prominent railroad man commented that "the rails are rough, the cars run hard and the drivers and horses are green. Those drivers ought to be railroad men. After the track has been used a little and the horses get accustomed to the work and the drivers have a little experience, everything will probably go all right." A woman was heard complaining because she had had to wait for one of the cars.

A reporter questioned one of the horse car conductors as to "How do people like the six cent fare?" After looking around carefully to see if anyone was in earshot, the conductor replied in a whisper, "They kick big and I don't blame 'em either; it's more bother than you can guess. Everybody has either a nickel or dime, but when you begin hunting for the pennies you can't find them." The conductor found that people were constantly asking him to make change. In the evening he often found that he was making change from his own pocket. "I have heard a number say that they would never ride again as long as the fare remained at six cents. The company don't worry, though, for at the end of the day the odd cent counts up big."

New horse car tickets were printed and went on sale Thursday 17 December. They were arranged five on a slip, printed on salmon colored pasteboard and bore Treasurer McGonegal's name. Single tickets were not for sale. Five were sold for twenty-five cents and twenty were sold for \$1.00. The directors voted the same day to sell a green ticket for children from three to eight years old and for all school children. The former could use them any time during the day but school children over eight years old could only use them from 8 to 9 in the morning, 12 to 1:30 and 4 to 5 in the afternoon. The green tickets were sold at the rate of 30 for \$1.00 or 15 for 50 cents. Eleven stores offered horse railway tickets for sale.

The street railway directors inspected the railway as far as it was completed on Friday 18 December and were much pleased with it. They

rode in the car "Albert H. Tuttle" first over the belt line and then on the main line as far as Wells Hill. They also inspected the barn and its contents. Afterwards they appointed George W. Crawford as car starter.

The horse railroad did a rattling business all day Sunday 20 December with about 1100 fares collected. So many people wanted to ride on the Center Rutland line that extra cars were put on to make half hour trips in the afternoon. Cars started from Cheney's store [corner of Strongs Avenue and Prospect Street] for Center Rutland at the every half hour. The new turnouts on State Street and near the Chaffee Crossing were finished and working well. Traffic was so much heavier than expected that the company needed to get more horses and more help. One woman had already learned the danger of the fare box by putting a quarter into it. The company could not return the money in such cases. Tickets were a great public convenience as well as a savings. But people who put in two or three tickets at once to pay several fares made trouble with the box that refused to take them in smoothly. The company requested that customers tear the tickets apart in all cases. The directors met on Friday evening 25 December and after considerable discussion agreed to accept the road as built. They reserved about \$4,500 to guarantee that the track would be finished according to contract.



The John W. Cramton was still operating in 1891 when it paused for the photographer at the corner of Grove and State Streets.

For some time Tuttle and McKeogh had been quietly buying stock and it was announced that they now held a majority of the stock. Michael Quinn had become interested with Tuttle and McKeogh and the three men now controlled the corporation. Their purchases included many small lots subscribed for by men in town and the remainder of the stock taken by the Haines Brothers. In all it amounted to \$25,000.

At a meeting of the board of directors on Saturday 26 December, J.D. Haines, J.H. McGonegal, S.D. Lake and Charles Haines resigned from the board. M. Quinn, G.H. Cheney, M. McKeogh and T. J. Lyon were elected to their places. These four with A.H. Tuttle, J.W. Cramton and J.C. Dunn made up the new board which met on Saturday evening to elect Michael Quinn as the new President, A.H. Tuttle as Treasurer while J.N. Woodfin remained Secretary. On Monday evening Mr. McKeogh was elected superintendent of the street railway. The office of the railway would be located at Tuttle & McKeogh's office. The company rented a barn in the village for the horses used on the belt line. The company had 22 horses but planned to buy more immediately. There was about \$10,000 in stock held outside Rutland most of which was put out by the Haineses in buying material.

The Rutland Street Railway had finally arrived. The belt line was operating and the main line was operating as far as Center Rutland. By mid-May of 1886, the track to West Rutland would be completed and the whole system operating as planned. *The Poultney Journal* commented that Rutland had "a metropolitan appearance, and why not? Have they not a horse railroad in Rutland, and is it not the most enterprising town in the state?"

In 1894, the trolley system was electrified and cars moved at 30 miles per hour. In the early 20th Century the system was extended to Fair Haven and ultimately Poultney. In the summer a branch ran from Castleton Corners to Lake Bomoseen where the electric railroad company operated an amusement park. In the years 1912-1914 the system carried an average of nearly three million passengers annually. However, by 1923 the automobile was cutting deeply into the system's ridership and revenues. In 1924, the system was shut down.

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TOP: By the summer of 1886 horse-drawn cars such as this traveled along the causeway in West Rutland. BOTTOM: The West Rutland route made this view in front of Morse's store a common sight.

